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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000324

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SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT: AF ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARTER
MEETS WITH UN SPECIAL ENVOY OULD-ABDALLAH

REF: ADDIS ABABA 261

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C/NF) Summary. UN Special Envoy for Somalia Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah told Acting Assistant Secretary for Africa Phil Carter and Special Envoy for Somalia John Yates on February 2 that newly elected Transitional Federal Government /Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (TFG/ARS) President Sheikh Sharif was "unfamiliar with how the western world works," and was in need of immediate training in the basic functions of government. Ould-Abdallah told Carter that he had two messages for Sharif: that Sharif should establish his government in Mogadishu as soon as possible, and that he should form as inclusive a government as possible. Carter stressed that Sharif should make public statements in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers to fight al-Shabaab's anti-AMISOM propaganda. Lastly, Ould-Abdallah called for an independent third party to act as paymaster to the TFG/ARS joint security forces to ensure transparency and accountability in the process, a point raised by Prime Minister Meles in his meeting with Carter (REF). End Summary.

Ould-Abdallah: "Sharif's People are not Islamists, Just Dumb"

¶2. (C/NF) "Sharif and his associates have no idea how the world works," Ould-Abdallah observed, and therefore, they need training to teach them about basic office skills, let alone how a government functions. He said the group was "dumb" in the sense that they were ignorant of the modern world having spent their entire lives in Somalia with a few visits to the Middle East. Ould-Abdallah assessed that Sharif was a "young, inexperienced school teacher" who had learned his lesson from 2006. Sharif had been "scared to death" by the response from Ethiopia and the United States to the rise of the Islamic Courts, forcing him to go on the run, and was ready and willing to work with Washington.

Message for Sharif: Stay in Somalia and Be Inclusive

¶3. (C/NF) Ould-Abdallah said he had two messages for Sharif: don't travel for the first several months, and form an inclusive government. He emphasized it was critical that Sharif go to Mogadishu as soon as possible to begin doing the work of government, and to be seen in Somalia, in charge, working for the good of the people. He said Sharif needs to "fix his house first" before taking an extended tour of Europe. Carter agreed that immediately going to work in

Mogadishu would help develop the new government's credibility. Ould-Abdallah commented that international travel was considered prestigious by previous TFG leaders, but it distracted them from doing the real work.

¶4. (C/NF) Ould-Abdallah added that the parliament needed to return to Somalia as well. "Whether they get killed or not is their problem," but they must go back. He said "money talks," and he planned to end the per diem for the parliament by February 22 to force the members to act, otherwise they would remain in Djibouti or Nairobi.

¶5. (C/NF) Inclusivity would help generate support from among the disparate groups in Somalia, Ould-Abdallah stated. He noted that the next prime minister should be from the Darood clan as Sharif represented the Hawiye. He also said Sharif's government would never succeed if he alienated too many of the various factions that were on the fence as to whether to support the unity government or not. He opined that too many actors in Somalia did not understand what a state was, and wanted to solve their problems alone and by force.

¶6. (C/NF) Ould-Abdallah alleged that Sharif's preferred pick for prime minister, Dr. Abdirizak Osman Hassan (aka Dr. Jurile), was a part of the "Italian mafia," and corrupt, having previously conspired to steal millions of dollars with Italian politicians. He warned that Jurile had already introduced Sharif to the Italians and had been invited to Rome. (Note: Dr. Jurile accompanied Sharif in his meeting with Carter on February 2, reported SEPTEL. End Note.)

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Public Support for AMISOM Essential

¶7. (C/NF) Carter stressed that Sharif needed to express public support for the AMISOM peacekeeping troops as soon as possible to fight the anti-AMISOM propaganda being spread by al-Shabaab and other anti-TFG groups. Ould-Abdallah agreed, adding that the public relations and media battle was a critical one, and he lamented that there were no reliable independent news sources inside Somalia. He said that because of this, he had requested a UN radio station for Somalia in order to help disseminate accurate information to the Somalia people. He also stated that his office was beginning to work with Sharif's people on the public relations issue.

Mechanism for Joint Forces Payment Needed

¶8. (C/NF) Ould-Abdallah thanked Carter for the financial assistance Washington pledged to provide to help pay the salaries of the unity government joint security forces, and he agreed with Carter that the force would be vital to the success of the new government. Carter added that Prime Minister Meles (REF) had suggested that an independent organization would be needed to pay the troops on a weekly or daily basis. Such a method would allow the process to be transparent to both the Somalis and the international community. Ould Abdallah agreed with Meles, but insisted that a private security contractor would be the best way to address the problem. Carter suggested that an international NGO would be a better solution than a private security company. Carter added that AMISOM should not be involved in the payment process, so as not to be seen as the paymaster.

¶9. (U) Acting Assistant Secretary Carter approved this cable.
YAMAMOTO